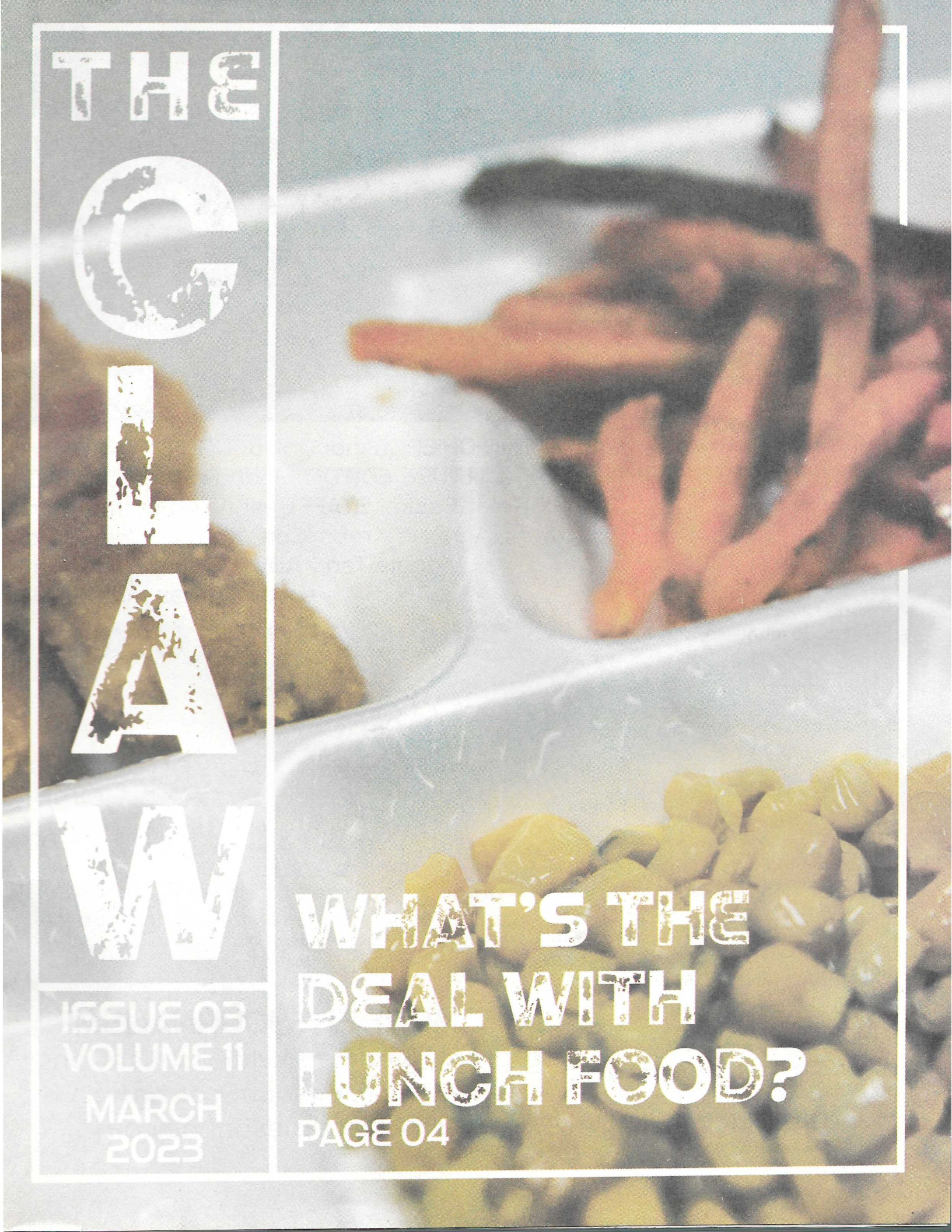




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DEAL WITH
LUNCH FOOD?
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Forget about whatever I said in my last letter. Every month is the busiest month in publications. The past few weeks have seen us at conferences, accepting awards and, yeah, another yearbook deadline.

Culture editor Maddox Karnes opens life with an investigation of school lunches, followed by a profile of social science teacher Sairee Knabe by Destiny Albrecht. The section closes with a piece about SWC stereotypes written by Maggie Terry and the freedoms of a first car written by life editor Chase Golem.

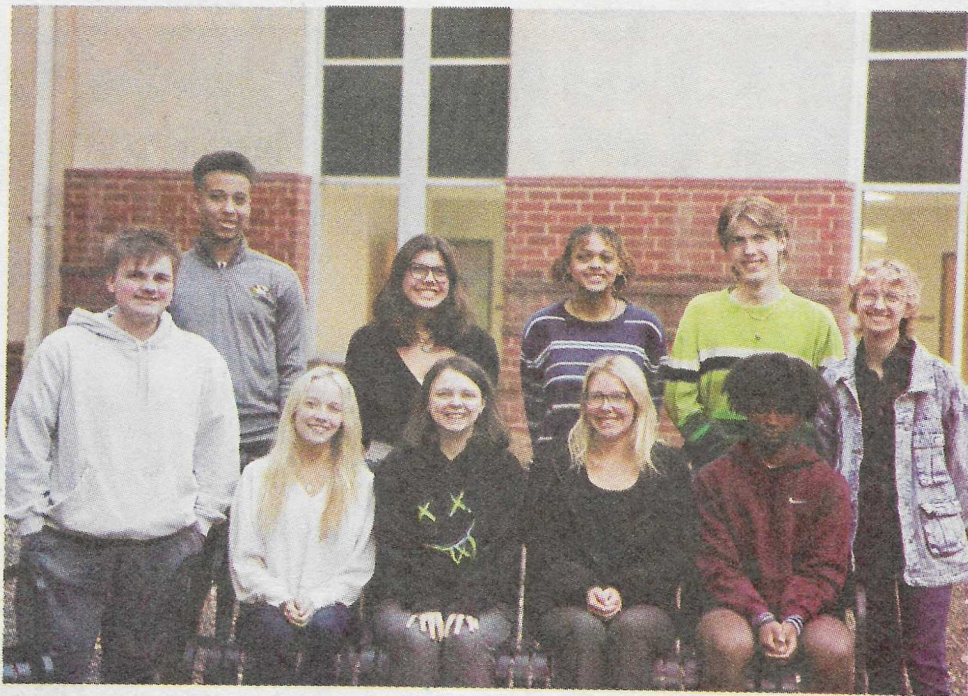
In sports, Kody Moore previews the EHS baseball season, and Terry and I take a look at the football culture in STL.

Albrecht's second piece offers a look at the most popular books of the year through the eyes of a bookseller. Annisyn Krebs-Carr examines the rise of Letterboxd's popularity.

In views, Jalen Flowers discusses unfair stereotypes of "theater kids." Karnes returns to share his harrowing tale of not having a phone for two days. To close the issue, views editor Nat Becker discusses anti-trans legislation.

Thank you so much for taking an issue of The Claw! It's been an exciting few months for us here in A113.

CASPAR DOWDY
Editor-in-chief



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The goal of The Claw is to report Life, Sports, Culture and Views stories to the students and faculty of Edwardsville High School. Students in Journalism and Yearbook primarily contribute to the magazine, but students outside of these programs can submit work and be published if that work is exceptional.

The Claw is a student-run publication, and the views featured in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of District 7 or any of its employees.

We appreciate letters to the editor, so long as the topics remain school appropriate. These letters may be sent to EDWARDSVILLEPUBLICATIONS@GMAIL.COM with "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line, or brought to room A113 before or after school.

We reserve the right to reject any letters for any reason, including lack of space, without explanation.

EHS lunch lacks life: 2022-2023 school lunches disappoint students

The 'changes' to this year's lunch offerings don't impress many students, administration hopes for return to pre-COVID offerings at some point.

By A&E editor Maddox Karnes

Senior Jayce Ayres sat down at her lunch table one Friday morning, and looking back at her was a pale, soggy pizza slice with precisely two pepperonis. The upper perimeter of her tray was scattered with dry celery and white strawberries. She looked around her plate, deciding which item she could bear eating first – she opted for pizza.

"This pizza is really bad... There's not a lot of seasoning, and the bread tastes bland," Ayres said.

Lunches didn't always used to be like this. Prior to 2020, the lunch line was filled with burgers, fries, a salad bar, ice cream, tea and all other sorts of popular items. The pandemic caused many of the beloved options to disappear; instead of having a variety of

“

There's not a lot of seasoning, and the bread tastes bland.

”

- Jayce Ayres

options, students received a standardized free lunch every day.

But now the pandemic lunches are gone. What used to be free during the 2020 and 2021 school years is now \$3.20 for students and \$3.50 for teachers, according to the EHS website. It has many asking why the old prices have returned but the old food has not.

"Freshman year they had the best Rice Krispy Treats I've ever had in my life, and now they don't have it," senior Grace Williams said. "[School lunch] is so horrible, I don't eat it anymore."

Williams isn't the only one disappointed. In a survey taken by 66 EHS seniors back in September, approximately 61% of them said they ate lunch in their freshman year when there were more lunch options. Only about 35% eat school lunch now.

Back in September, EHS principal Steve Stuart told in the *Tiger Times Online* newspaper that old menu options would slowly be integrated throughout the course of the year. While some smaller items have returned, not much has changed since the fall.

"I think we should have more diversity and selection in our lunch options," Ayres said. "[We were] promised lunches that would be better, yet here we are... There are like two options."

Dr. Stuart has been trying to expand upon these "two options," but it has taken longer than he or any of the staff could have expected.



Top: A student picks up their Italian dippers. When they received their meal, the cheese had exploded from the bread and hardened around the meal.
Middle: The chicken nugget meal lays on a lunch tray.
Bottom: Baked Beans lay next to the cheese bites item, which are separate from the Italian dippers.

The issue has to do with the supply chain. The number of options the school can offer is limited by what the purveyors can provide, and, according to Dr. Stuart, they have not been able to supply the surplus they used to.

"There's nothing we can have consistently just because we don't

“

[School lunch] is so horrible, I don't eat it anymore.

”

- Grace Williams

know what we're going to get," Dr. Stuart said.

This obstacle hasn't stopped Dr. Stuart from trying to make lunches better, however. He's hopeful that change will still slowly come.

"It's getting better, and hopefully by next year, [lunch] will be back to the old way with everything there every day," Dr. Stuart said.

And as far as food fatigue, Dr. Stuart can sympathize with students.

"I'm not a chicken nugget fan, and I hate seeing chicken nuggets roll out three, four days a week," Dr. Stuart said. "You need variety, and that's what my goal is, to increase variety." ■

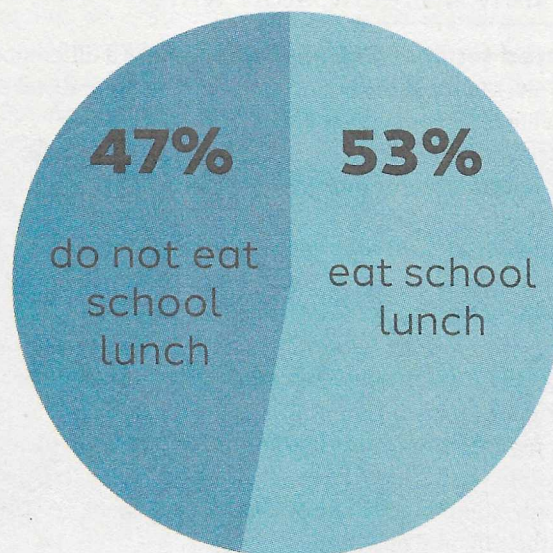


photo by Maddox Karnes

Ayres' pizza lunch sits on her lunch table on Friday, Feb. 17. "I just took [the pizza] because it was the best option out of all the other ones," Ayres said. "It was the lesser of the evils... It's a little sad and disappointing."

Student Statistics

in a survey of 193 EHS students...



of those who eat school lunch...



Knabe shows passion through the care of her students at EHS

Social studies teacher works hard to keep her students as top priority while juggling other responsibilities as an EHS faculty member and a parent.

By Destiny Albrecht, staff writer

Respected teacher Sairee Knabe makes a difference in students' lives in many aspects: classroom teaching, social events and even life outside of education.

Mrs. Knabe teaches required social studies classes and electives. She studied psychology in college while also getting her teaching degree.

"I decided that I wanted to get a job instead of keep going to school [instead of becoming a psychologist]," Mrs. Knabe said. "I got lucky that I got to teach psychology."

Once she finished her education at SIUE, she secured a position at EHS, which offered an opportunity to teach the thing she was most passionate about.

"I love psychology because it is so easy for students to connect to," Mrs. Knabe said, "and it gives me an opportunity to help people understand themselves better and give them tips to improve their mental health."

Mrs. Knabe values the study of psychology not only at school, but home too. In class, she talks about how much she learned about the subject in college and that she uses the strategies on her own children at home.

"She's great at applying what we're learning in class to the outside world in ways that we'll use eventually," junior Emmy Pollock said. "For example, she talks about specific instances with her kids and that helps the class understand it a lot more."

Not only is she a great role model for her family, but also for students at EHS as well. Many students express how much Mrs. Knabe helps them and plays an important role in their school life.

"She's made me love school, especially my psychology class," Pollock said. "Not only is the subject super interesting, but she really shows her passion through teaching and that's what makes the class amazing."

Raising awareness and helping students with mental health has always been a priority for Knabe. She puts it above anything else in the classroom, with herself and her students.

Mrs. Knabe explains that in order to be a good teacher for her students, she must be the best she can be and to do that, she has to mentally and physically take care of herself.

She does this with exercises and lots of time management.

Actively seeing this in class, many students come to her for advice on their own struggles. Knabe is happy to help.

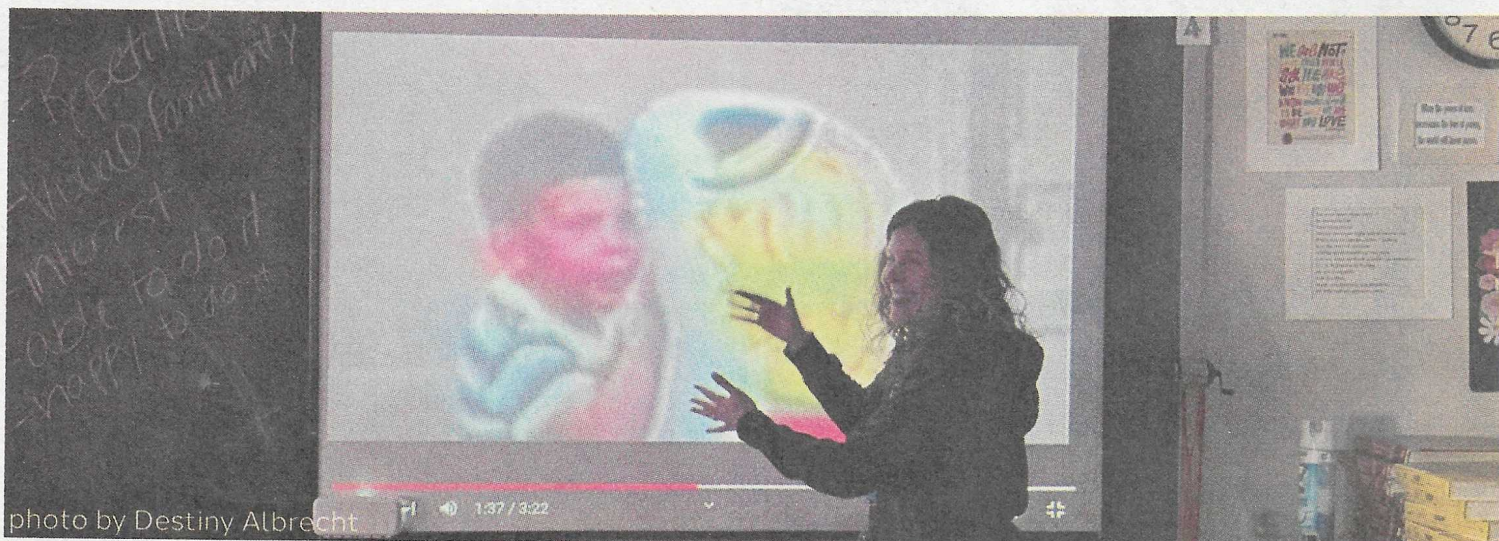
"The way she carries herself, it's like she's my second mom," senior Jack Laughlin said. "In her class, she always makes me feel safe. She's very caring and always wants to know if we are okay. It's like a breath of fresh air to know that she'll always be there for us."

Mrs. Knabe certainly has a positive impact on her students, making them feel "at home" when they're in school, according to Laughlin.

With Prom coming up in May, there's a committee meeting every Thursday to help with set-up and planning. As Prom's sponsor, Mrs. Knabe runs the sessions with students who are willing to participate.

Senior Ellie Bozarth shows up every week, ready to do what she can to contribute, so she has also grown quite close to Knabe.

"Mrs. Knabe is the best teacher I've ever had in my entire life,"



Knabe passionately teaches her conditioning unit to her sixth hour class. "I teach in way that gets my students engaged," Knabe said. "I show them videos instead of standing at the front all hour teaching in hopes that they don't get bored and actually listen to what I'm saying."

Bozarth said. "If you ever need anyone to talk to, she is always there. She treats students with kindness and respect. I look up to her so much because she actually takes the time to get to know her students and be involved, and that is what matters."

It's clear her students care about her and her success, which

“

The way she carries herself, it's like she's my second mom. In her class, she always makes me feel safe. She's very caring and always wants to know if we are okay. It's like a breath of fresh air to know that she'll always be there for us.”

”

- Jack Laughlin

drives and encourages her to give everything she has to helping the school and the people within the community.

"Teaching is exhausting," Mrs. Knabe said. "But all my kids make each day worth it, the good and the bad. There are often many struggles throughout the day, but the little notes left on my desk or kind words throughout the day keep me going."

According to Bozarth, Prom is shaping up to be a great night and Knabe is doing a great job organizing the perfect night for students. But Prom isn't the only event that Mrs. Knabe is working on at the moment. She helps with mental health awareness and serves on the board of directors for the YMCA.

"Sometimes I wonder why I do this to myself," Mrs. Knabe said, "but all of them are important to me. I just care about them too much to not do it."

Bozarth said that even with the stress that Mrs. Knabe deals with every day, she still puts her students first and that's what makes her a great teacher.

Her teaching style is unlike others', according to Laughlin. While most teachers give presentations and homework afterward, she conducts discussions and gives students a chance to voice their opinions.

Mrs. Knabe doesn't assign a great deal of homework because she wants to take into consideration that students have lives outside of school and that should be valued, according to Laughlin.

"I'm glad she doesn't give out a ton of work," Laughlin said. "It makes it easier on my personal life."

Because of these factors, Mrs. Knabe has been voted as the speaker at graduation to announce names as seniors walk across the stage to get their diploma.

"I believe that they're giving me too much credit," Mrs. Knabe

said, "but I'm honored to have been picked for something as special as that."

Despite all of her responsibilities, Knabe tries to keep her personal life separate from the one at school. Sometimes, however, they overlap. She's okay with that, though, because her kids will one day be at the high school and she wants them to feel "more a part of the community."

As long as Mrs. Knabe is teaching what she's passionate about she'll continue to influence students, and graduating seniors are going to miss her quite a bit once they go off to college.

"I'm going to miss her so much after high school," Bozarth said. "But, that's okay. I know we will stay in touch because she's going to be my ring bearer at my wedding." ■

Getting to know Knabe a little bit more:

What's your favorite food?

"That's so hard, I love food. Maybe crab legs."

What's your favorite color?

"Green, because I love everything about nature."

What's your favorite thing to do outside of school?

"Be with my kids and husband, basically doing anything with them."

What's your favorite book?

"There's so many, but honestly anything by Kristin Hannah."

What's your favorite movie?

"I don't really have one. I love all Disney movies and historical dramas that tackle injustice."

Where have you always wanted to travel?

"Definitely Portugal because it's right on the coast, but you're still getting that European experience. I loved it in Greece and Italy, so I know I would thoroughly enjoy the culture in Portugal."

Is this Edwardsville or Beverly Hills?

The stereotype of EHS students being 'rich kids' is still growing, but it paints an inaccurate picture of students.

By Maggie Terry, staff writer

"Daddy's money" erupts from the opposing student section. The insult of being "stuck up" is thrown around by students from rival schools.

EHS students have been enduring the same insults for years.

"I think of EHS students to be preppy rich kids who think they are better than most people," Collinsville High School senior Aubrey Kohler said.

EHS is a part of the Southwestern Conference, which includes seven high schools from the 618 area. The other six schools include Collinsville, O'Fallon, Belleville East, Belleville West, East St. Louis and Alton.

The SWC competes in sports with each other year-round.

Throughout the six opposing SWC schools, the stereotype of EHS seems to stay constant with students.

"I think immediately of rich kids," Alton senior Kennedy Stephens said. "That seems to be the common assumption at Alton."

According to senior Wyatt Christopher, that assumption is the same for the O'Fallon student body.

"I think every O'Fallon student has had an experience or known someone that has had an experience with a cocky Edwardsville kid," Christopher said.

This stereotype isn't new. EHS Athletic Director Alex Fox has been hearing these stereotypes for the 25 years he has been working at EHS.

So why is EHS associated with being "rich and cocky kids"?

Edwardsville has the second highest household income in the SWC, with O'Fallon being first. The area has seen constant growth, adding more businesses and residents every year.

Mr. Fox believes that as the town has grown more, so has the use of the stereotype.

"People attribute growth to money," Mr. Fox said.

Students from opposing schools have different opinions of why, however.

Stephens says that the main reason she thinks of Edwardsville as "rich kids" is because of the difference between the school's opportunities and resources.

Alton has recently made multiple budget cuts in different departments of the high school to allow lunches to be free for students. This decision was made because of the number of kids that rely on school lunches as their only meal for the day.

"As an outsider looking in on Edwardsville, it doesn't appear that is something many Edwardsville students have to think about on a daily basis," Stephens said.

Christopher's reason for his views revolve around the way EHS students have treated other players or students.

According to Christopher, there have been multiple occurrences where EHS players have taken sports rivalries with O'Fallon too far.

"[O'Fallon students] have tried to give Edwardsville the benefit of the doubt on multiple occasions," Christopher said. "But overall, the school and the players tend to be cocky in the end."

Christopher explained that he knows that not all EHS students are spoiled, but the ones who cause the problems are the ones who cause the stereotypes to continue to exist.

For some EHS students, including senior Lexi Trimm, the stereotype is nothing more than a joke between schools.

"There has been the ongoing catchphrase that we are the premiere high school in Illinois and it kind of snowballed into a joke," Trimm said.

As an insult or joke, the stereotypes are painting a false picture of all EHS students.

"I just think that once you start saying that everyone is one thing," Mr. Fox said. "It's just unfair." ■



Getting a car takes students to the next phase of life: more freedom

As teenagers get driver's licenses and that first car, they experience initial hesitation, instant jubilation and more socialization.

By Chase Golem, student life editor

Getting your driver's license is a notable step in life. Being able to drive around alone for the first time and hang out with friends without the need for your parents to take you.

For many, it's more than a plastic card, it's freedom.

Of 161 students surveyed who said they had a license, 97% said they felt a sense of freedom when they received their license.

For senior Keaton Anderson, who was part of the 97%, having his license is relaxing.

"I felt like for the first time in my life I had complete control," Anderson said. "Although it was scary, I felt confident enough to drive well."

When students first received their license, about 58% said they were scared to drive alone for the first time.

Senior Jessica Loyet described driving on her own to be relieving and somewhat sad.

“My favorite part of the summer before my sophomore year was driving around with my mom and boyfriend to get hours and when I got my license that would stop.”

- Jessica Loyet

Getting the 50 hours of driving with a parent can be difficult. Of 52 students who responded who are in the permit phase, 50% said it was stressful to drive with a parent around – including sophomore Luke Slater.

"They help me know what to look for and when to look for it," Slater said. "They also have more experience than we so learning from them is fun. Most of the time, I already know what I'm doing wrong, so them repeating it back is annoying."

With the added freedom, students seem to go out more. About 74% of students with a license said they drive around with their friends often.

"I have much more time on my hands now that I'm driving," Anderson said. "I'm not sitting inside the school or after practice

waiting an hour for my parents to come pick me up. I hang out with my friends much more because of it."

Waiting for a parent or sibling to go somewhere is what Slater has had to deal with. To get with friends or go places, he has to consider his mother's schedule to get around, making him ready to get his license right when he turns 16.

"Without having to coordinate with my parents and sister's schedules (my sister can't drive yet and she's in college), I would be able just to hang out with people with no worries," Slater said. "I could also have more of a break from life more than just school and home, letting me go to libraries and other places as well."

While students are away from home and school, parents want to know where they are. Of students surveyed, 52% with a license said that they use Life360, an app that tracks people's locations, or something similar. Others have a curfew, which ranges with different times into the night.

"I don't have to tell my parents when I'm leaving, but I always let them know where I'm going," Anderson said. "I have a curfew of 11 p.m. but there have been instances with friends and other special circumstances, and they're always very understanding."

Being able to hang out with friends and do things becomes much easier with a license, and why 68% of students didn't wait to get their license.

"I'm a pretty traditional girl so we went on the day of my 16th birthday," Loyet said. "I wanted the freedom and my mom wanted to stop driving her youngest child around." ■

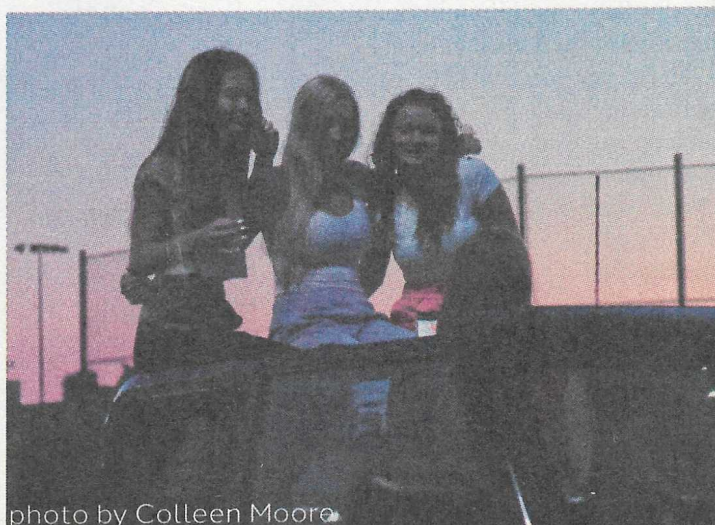


photo by Colleen Moore

Seniors Maranda Fosse, Ella Heddinghaus and Abi Burroughs sit on top of a Ford Bronco during the senior sunrise on Aug. 26.



photo by Annabel Carr

The girls lacrosse team at a game on April 19, 2022, when they were still a school-sponsored club.

Girls lacrosse looks forward to first season as official school sport

By Pera Onal, staff writer

With their first games set for March, girls lacrosse is finalizing teams and tidying up stick skills for their first season as an official school sport.

Prior to this year, the girls lacrosse team was only a club sport that was run through Glen Carbon and Edwardsville, and in 2022, it became school sponsored.

According to senior Caroline Marcus, who's been playing since her sophomore year, being an official school sport means following IHSA coaching and practicing guidelines, as well as competing in the IHSA conference.

"We can play more schools' teams as an official school sport, and the school provides us with more services like better access to equipment, fields, locker rooms and uniforms," said junior Grace Taylor, who's been playing lacrosse for over a year.

Head coach David Boots said the idea for a lacrosse team was initially introduced by Marcus and seniors Kaila Marshall and Lane Goodwin, who has since then transferred schools. In order to make it happen, the three of them set out to recruit enough girls for a full team.

Boots moved from Washington D.C. in 2007, where his son and daughter played lacrosse. He and his late wife started and coached a "youth program" in O'Fallon so that his daughter had a chance to keep playing.

Marcus knew Keith Schmidt, the program director of the Edwardsville Youth Lacrosse Club, who eventually reached out to Boots about the new team. Boots knew Schmidt through the St. Louis Youth League.

"Over the years, I have coached several youth players from

the Edwardsville area, and I always told the girls, if they could get enough players for a team, I would come and coach it," he said. "When Keith approached me and asked if I would consider coaching a high school girls team, it was an easy decision for me."

At EHS, lacrosse is a "no-cut" sport, which means tryouts are focused on splitting the players into varsity and junior varsity teams, rather than cutting them. Players who are newer to the sport will be further taught.

"Lacrosse is a growing sport in the area...none of the new girls joining the team have played before," coach Boots said. "Experience with other sports can help, but as long as you are willing to do the work, you will fit right in."

Sophomore Nora O'Connor, a new player this season, decided to join with some of her friends so they could be involved in a school sport. Although learning how to play a new sport has been difficult, she said her teammates and coaches have been a big help.

"I've already made a lot of friends on the team, and everyone is crazy nice," O'Connor said. "I think it is a great environment to learn how to play a sport and as a team."

Marcus said she's excited to finally be "a full high school team," which is something she and Marshall have been "working towards" since she started during her sophomore year.

As a first-timer, O'Connor said she's most looking forward to growing as a player.

"This is my first year playing [lacrosse], and I have already fallen in love with the sport," she said. "I'm excited to see how my skills will progress throughout the year."

The spring of football and football

St. Louis sports fans have more options to cheer in the 2023 season.

By Maggie Terry, staff writer; Caspar Dowdy, editor-in-chief

With the debut of St. Louis City Soccer and the revival of the XFL's Battlehawks, the St. Louis sports scene is heading in to the 2023 season with new energy.

Both teams were quick to make an impression in their respective leagues, snagging wins in their first games and clearing new ground for STL's fan culture to prove its dedication. Though City SC's first game, a 3-2 victory against Austin FC, was more than 800 miles away, some soccer devotees still made the trek to see the team win, while venues around St. Louis hosted opportunities for fans to watch the game closer to home.

"We're ready to have that loud, that excitement, that energy that we've heard so much about, we're ready to actually experience it in our hometown," said Carolyn Kindle, the president and CEO of the first women-led ownership group in MLS, in a preseason press conference.

The Battlehawks also received a warm welcome from the city, bringing the "Kaw-Kaw" chant back to St. Louis after the team's original inaugural season was cancelled midway through due to COVID. Two years later, the XFL has found new structure under new ownership, and the Dome at America's Center once again has a football team.

The team finished February with a 2-0 record and viral support, with game viewership peaking at 2.3 million during its opening weekend, and #KawKaw trending nationally in Twitter's top 10, according to KSDK.

While the excitement surrounding the two teams may be relatively recent, both sports have a long history in St. Louis communities.

The city has had an inconsistent relationship with professional football over the years. After the unsuccessful launch of two one-season teams in the early 1900s, St. Louis went without an NFL team until the '60s, when the Cardinals took that place up until 1987, as Fox2Now reported. 1995 saw the arrival of the Rams, and 2016 saw their exit, leaving many area football fans without an

obvious team to cheer on.

In 2020, when the XFL first brought the Battlehawks to St. Louis, the team found support from the football-beleaguered city and success with a 3-2 record before the season was suspended. After being purchased by Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and his business partners, the league returned for the 2023 season, which saw the Battlehawks make their home turf debut on March 12.

The tradition of soccer in St. Louis runs even deeper than football's, stretching back to 1881, when Soccer History USA reports that the earliest organized soccer took place in the city. Since then, despite professional soccer's slow rise to prominence throughout the country, the sport has flourished in the metro area.

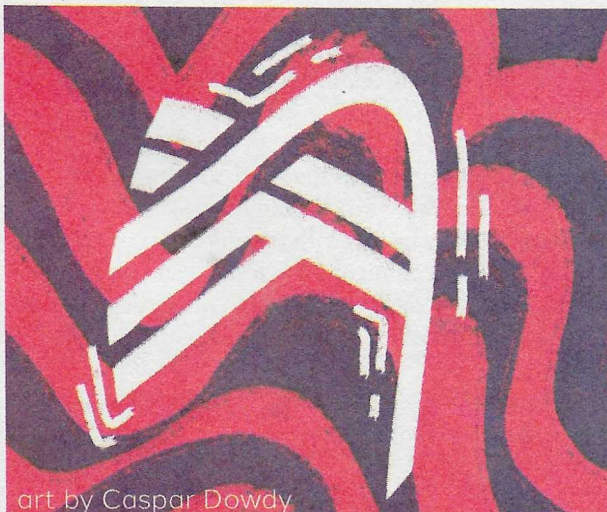
"During the early years of soccer, St. Louis was the western outpost of the major soccer regions, as immigrant communities brought their game to the major industrial centers of the country," an article on soccerhistoryusa.org reads.

Soccer grew in the city through church leagues and company teams, creating an environment that passed the sport through generations of amateur and professional players. As a result, the area has long been heavily represented in the world of American soccer, including an infamous World Cup upset in which the U.S. beat England with a team that had five players from the St. Louis region.

Now, after a century of soccer history and nearly 30 years of attempting to land an MLS team, the city has been able to welcome an expansion team to the stadium-dotted landscape in the shadow of the arch.

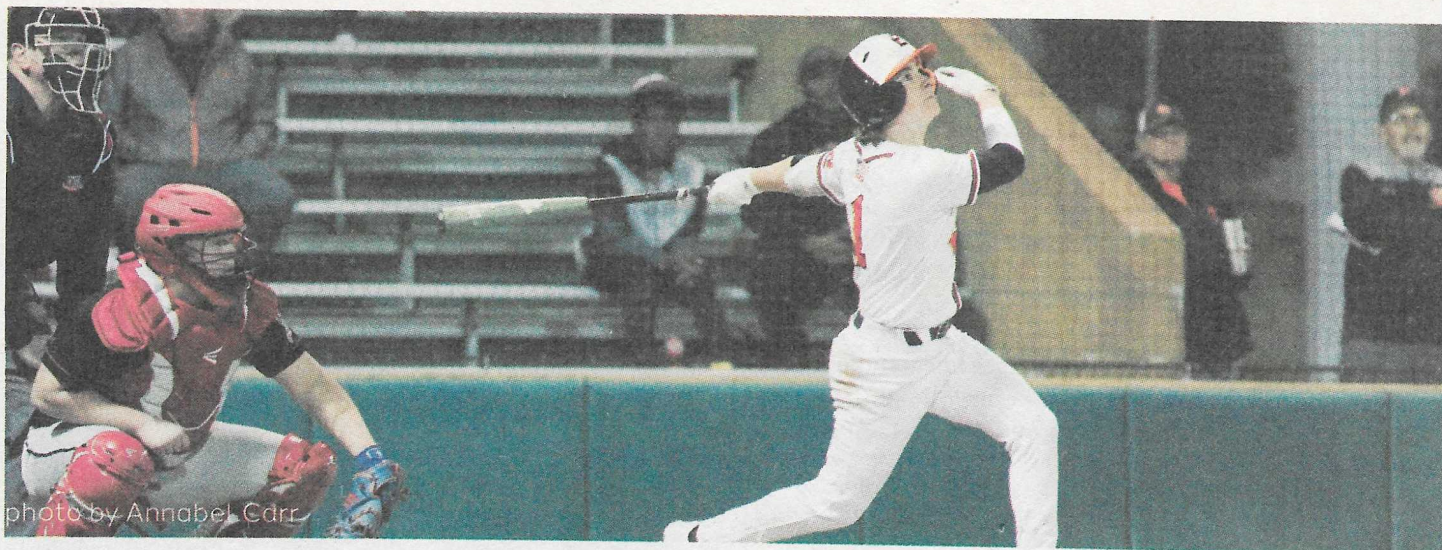
For players like senior Olivia Baca, who will continue her soccer career at Xavier next fall, the elevation of the sport makes St. Louis' soccer legacy all the more meaningful.

"I think [the team] is really exciting because I am a soccer player," she said, "and to see it develop in a city known for soccer is something that is really impactful for younger generations."



art by Caspar Dowdy





Cole Funkhouser hits the ball deep in a game versus Benet Academy at Edwardsville on March 17, 2022. Edwardsville ultimately won the game 3-1.

No. 1 ranked Tigers are 'excited' to return to the diamond this spring

The players and coaches are preparing to defend their spot at the top.

by Kody Moore

After a successful season last year, the Edwardsville High School baseball team is gearing up to defend their state championship but faces the hard challenge of replacing many talented seniors who graduated last year.

Last season, the baseball team won the Class 4A State Championship and finished with 36-4 record. The team's success was largely due to the leadership of the graduating seniors, who were key players in every aspect of the game.

With several talented seniors graduating departing from the team, the upcoming season will be a challenging one for the players and coaches. However, the team is optimistic about this season, thanks to a promising group of underclassmen who are expected to step up and fill the gaps left by the departing seniors.

Despite the loss of key players, head coach Tim Funkhouser and seniors are optimistic about the team's chances to return to state this year.

"I am excited to go out and win games to defend our state championship title," senior Montrez West said.

Even though the Tigers lost many key players, the Tigers are still the rewarded with having maintained their top ranking in the state, according to Maxpreps and PBR.

One senior who will be stepping up is Nicholas Bobinski-Boyd, who has been a standout player for the Tigers, and his skills as an outfielder are widely recognized by his teammates and the coaching staff.

"I didn't get to play much but, I still was a part of the state

appearance," Bobinski-Boyd said, "I saw what it took to become successful late in the season."

Bobinski-Boyd saw few appearances on varsity as a junior but batted over a .400 average in JV games last year.

The upcoming season for the Tigers is looking promising, and they have an experienced leader in senior Cole Funkhouser, who will be taking on the role of captain. Cole is the son of coach Funkhouser, who has led the Tigers for more than a decade.

"I recognized as a leader that I will have to build bonds with everyone on the team, especially the new players," Cole said. "I remember my first time on varsity and I was very nervous so if I can help the (younger) players feel comfortable hopefully that will get rid of some nerves and make them feel confident."

As the leadoff batter in most games, Cole was responsible for setting the tone for the team's offense. Last year he had an impressive batting average of .289, according to the St. Louis Post Dispatch.

In an effort to return back to the state, the squad is very eager to take the field once more and defend their title.

The season officially begins with tryouts on Feb. 27, and they will also play their first game on March 16 versus Lockport Township at EHS. The squad is assured to put up a good fight on the field with a mix of seasoned veterans and promising new talent.

"I am just excited to be back with the team," West said, "It is a joy to play and practice with my teammates day in and day out." ■

**If you're a creative
organized
involved
social
curious
inventive
cooperative
fun
responsible
productive
hard-working person,
you might just be a
yearbook person.**

If you're interested in writing, photography and design and want to get more involved in the school community, keep an eye out for applications to the 2023-24 yearbook staff. They'll become available mid-April.

No yearbook experience is necessary: we're willing to teach if you're excited about learning.

Here are the Top 10 bestselling books from a Books-A-Million bookseller

By: Destiny Albrecht, staff writer

While it may have been an underlying hobby for thousands of years, reading has become a “trend” due to the trending #BookTok take-over on the prevalent app TikTok.

According to the National Publisher's Database, the 10 bestselling books have each sold one million copies. From a point of view from a bookseller at the local Books-A-Million, fiction seems to trump the list over any other genre.

10: The science fiction sellout “The Midnight Library” by Matt Haig. The book explores the regretful life of Nora Seed and her journey of making things right. In each of the library's novels, magic offers Nora a way to relive her life and fix her mistakes. However, things aren't always what they seem, and she faces a difficult danger with a choice of how to live.

While I have yet to read this specific one, I have seen it all over my Goodreads app. Approximately 485,000 people have rated it four stars, and it won the 2020 Best Fiction Goodreads Choice Award.

Because Haig struggles with mental health issues, according to The Guardian, it brings his books to life with meaning and magic. With its attractive cover and engaging plot line, people are still coming into the bookstore and purchasing it.

“The only way to learn is to live” is the overall lesson to take from the book, and I think that something so moving and inspirational deserves to be in the top 10. After reading reviews, I have put this book on my to be read list, not that I need another one considering the hundreds I have waiting on my bookshelf but oh well.

9: “People We Meet on Vacation,” written by bestselling author Emily Henry, was a hit for 2022. This book is a classic friends-to-lovers romance with a fun journey to find where the main character belongs.

I thought it was fine. It wasn't a ground-breaking, life-changing book, but it was okay. The writing was simple and the plot was cliché, but not a horrible read. Would I reread it? Absolutely not. Would I recommend it? Sure, I guess.

Henry has written a few other popular novels such as “Beach Read,” “Book Lovers” and the greatly anticipated “Happy Place,” which will make its debut in April of this year. With the easy-to-follow plot and light-hearted storytelling, Henry appeals to many

coming in and out of the bookstore.

8: In eighth place sits a successful book with a let-down of a movie. “Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens was a nominee for Goodreads' Best Historical Fiction award due to its coming-of-age murder mystery and intertwining stories. While the book was enjoyable, the movie did not meet critics' expectations.

Rotten Tomatoes rated it a 34%, disappointed with the poor execution of the film. But, senior Grace Williams disagrees with the overall rating.

“It was almost the exact same,” Williams said, “but I know a lot of people said that they thought it was boring. I, however, thought it was great and sobbed quite literally the whole movie.”

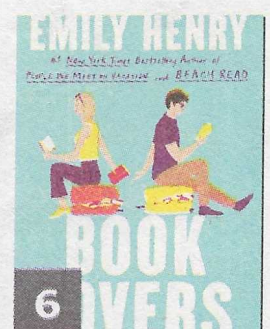
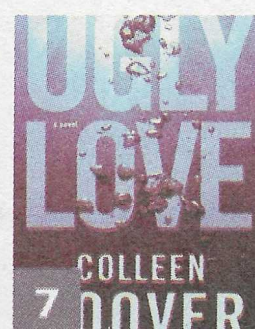
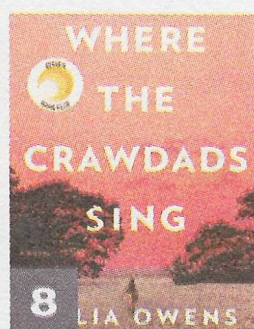
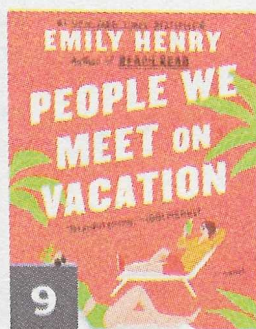
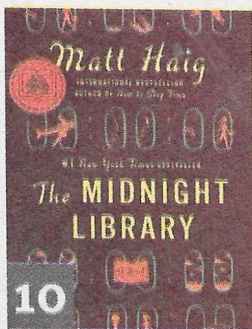
7: A twisted love story by none other than the overnight sensation and romance writer Colleen Hoover, “Ugly Love” takes seventh place. Told through points of view, one being in the past and the other in the present, Hoover tells a convoluted tale of two independent people with troubled pasts and how they overcome them.

For most, the novel is a hit or miss. You either read it and hate everything in it, or you love it and the theme represented throughout the novel. The main characters learn to work through their trauma to create a better future for their relationship but also themselves as individuals.

It's honestly super messed up and twisted but, me being me and liking those kinds of stories, I enjoyed it. Again, not the best book and no, I wouldn't read it again, but it was a good read at the time.

6: The previously mentioned book by Emily Henry “Book Lovers” sits in sixth place. The winner of Goodreads' Best Romance of 2022 Choice Award fills online platforms and bookstores such as Barnes and Noble, Books-A-Million and thrift stores nearby.

The novel follows the book-loving main character's trip away from home with her beloved sister where she runs into the love interest time and time again, forming a connection over a series of coincidences. While the story follows a sort of predictable Hallmark movie plot, the questionable twist leaves you wondering what's going to happen next.



Junior Chase Chrenka believes that it doesn't deserve the hype that it got.

"I thought it was cute and romantic," she said, "but it was so cheesy, and that's just not my thing at all."

5: "Reminders of Him" by Colleen Hoover sits in fifth place due to its depressing, yet moving story of a woman that has faced severe loss and spent months in prison away from those she loves. The emotional take on the "villain's" point of view was touching and heart-wrenching, to say the least.

"I personally thought it was one of her better books," senior Chloe Brinkman said. "It kept me wondering what was going to happen next. It was very heartfelt and definitely made me cry a little bit."

According to Goodreads, approximately 94% of readers enjoyed this tale of redemption and fate. With the journey and growth of the main character progressing throughout the story, the reader gets to as well.

I agree with Brinkman with the fact that this novel was one of her best. It was a touching story and is probably one of my favorites by Hoover.

4: Taking fourth place is the one hit wonder author Ali Hazelwood with "The Love Hypothesis." Many students who would argue against this opinion, but I believe that this book is incredibly overrated and doesn't deserve all the hype that it gets.

First of all, are we just going to ignore the fact that it started off as "Star Wars" fanfiction? The writing is definitely not the best and to be completely honest, the main character was insufferable to read about. She gave off quirky "pick me girl" vibes, and I hated every minute of it.

From someone who has read better, I did not like it. But senior Taylor Heberer disagrees. Her opinion seems to be in line with many others though, according to the fact that it's in the top 10 best sellers.

"The Love Hypothesis' is an easy book to fall in love with," Heberer said. "I really admire the STEM aspect in Hazelwood's books, which makes it even more powerful for women since the heroine is intelligent and capable."

I mean, there has to be a reason why it's sold over a million copies right? I feel like at least half of those people were disappointed like I was and don't want to admit it.

3: Yet another book by the incredibly famous author Hoover takes a place on the stand with "Verity," a psychological thriller unlike her other novels.

Listen, people can talk smack about her other books all they want, but no one can deny that this one was a masterpiece. I have never read anything like it, and I loved the spine-tingling plot.

Not once did I know what was going to happen next, and I lived for it. The romance subplot was definitely not perfect and I could've gone without, but it contributed to the twisted story of the three main characters. The writing could've been better by a lot, but I still thoroughly enjoyed it. It was easy to get through, and if a book is a four-hour read, then I call that a win.

And unlike her other romances, this book brought in a diverse selection of readers. Senior Wyatt Blunt read it and thought the novel had a great plot.

"However, the way that she conveys things is really linear," Blunt said. "It could've been a 5 stars book, but the simple writing lowered it down a level."

2: "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" by Taylor Jenkins Reid. If anything belongs at the top of the list, it is this one.

This book is breathtaking in a way that you're stuck wondering what the heck you just read. The life of Evelyn Hugo is full of not only several marriages but also partying, happiness and hardships. The main lesson to take away is to live a life of no regrets and I hope everyone who reads it fulfills that motto.

The plot twist had my mouth hanging open and I couldn't have written it better. If I could only recommend one book out of the top 10, it would be this one. The second I picked it up, I fell in love with it.

"This has to be the absolute best book I have ever read," senior Tiara Arzola said. "It was amazing and I would kill to read it for the first time again."

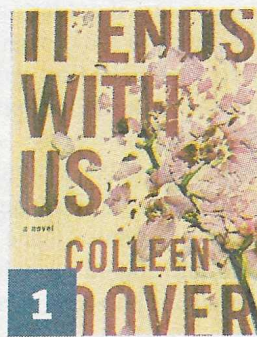
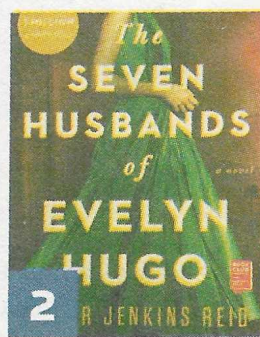
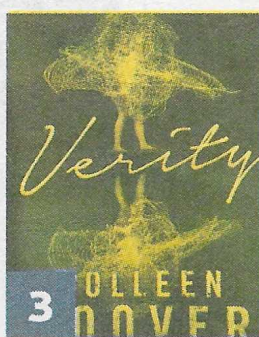
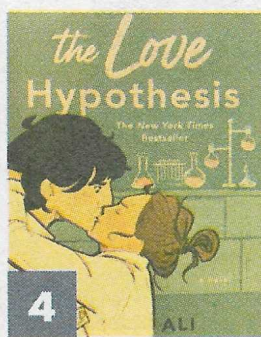
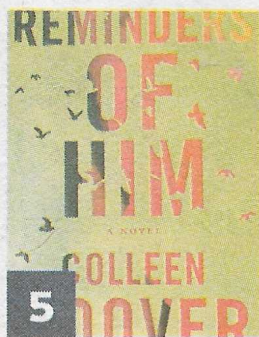
1: The one and only "It Ends With Us" by, guess who, Colleen Hoover takes first place as the most sold book. I know, what a shocker. There have been many to speak out against the book's plot, saying it romanticizes abusive relationships, but obviously millions of people loved the novel so what made it so appealing?

While the author isn't the best at writing as we have addressed already, she writes in a way that many can easily understand and I think that's what lured people in. However, I don't think that this book was the best of hers. It was so overhyped and extremely predictable.

Many other students feel the same way. Chrenka described it as "poorly written."

It's the most bought book of the year 2022 at the local Books A Million. Annoyed by this thought, co-manager Brad Brewer said that he "could walk down the street and more people know the plot of 'It Ends With Us' than 'Romeo and Juliet.'"

However, many students clearly enjoy the book, along with her others, considering how many girls I see walking around with Hoover's novels in their hands. All I have to say is you do you, but try to branch out a bit and try some of these other titles listed. ■



Back to the good old days of 2014

As social media-savvy teenagers begin to mold the fashion industry and the trend cycle speeds up, barely-dated fashion reappears again and again.

by Caspar Dowdy, editor-in-chief

Do you remember the '80s?

Obviously not — not if you're in the target demographic of a high school student newspaper. But I'm fairly confident you remember the early 2010s, when pop culture yearned once again for a distinct '80s flavor and brought on the advent of vaporwave, "Stranger Things" and Converse's return to ubiquity.

The theory that culture exists in a 40-year cycle — sometimes 30 or 20 — of nostalgia suggests that, when people become adults capable of influencing trends, they tend to revive what brought them joy in their youth. As the 2010s wore on, the theory seemed to prove itself again, when '80s trends faded away and consumers were drawn to new old things, leaving '90s kids to watch teens half their age wear what they bought at the mall in high school.

Y2K's vice-grip on the fashion industry seems to be loosening, though, now that the 2020s are in full effect. It's being replaced by the quaint nostalgia of trends less than a decade old.

Gen Z's overwhelming presence on social media means you no longer have to wait until adulthood to drive cultural shifts and revive favorite childhood aesthetics. No style expertise is required; it's enough to be a teenager on TikTok with a half-decent camera setup. Eager to join in on the trendsetting, increasingly-younger fashion influencers seem to be following what the adults do, but with much less to look back fondly on.

So now trendy people on the internet are listening to Lana Del Rey and the Arctic Monkeys and Lorde again, having ditched AirPods for over-ear headphones, and treating moodboards of flower-crown-era Coachella outfits with the same reverence that historians give to tattered photos taken in times of war.

And hey, Twitter is on its last legs, so now seems like the time for everyone to dust off their Tumblr accounts and get back to blogging — #2014core.

The nostalgia cycle is a full-blown tornado now, bringing back trends faster and faster with each passing year. It's gotten to the point where videos are popping up to reminisce over 2020, back when "quarantine" meant "longer spring break" and making whipped coffee over Benet's "Supalonely" was all you needed TikTok for.

In some ways, it makes sense that we want to look back; it feels like so much has happened in such little time. Technology is evolving as fast, if not faster than society can adapt, and the headlines seem to bear dozens of "once-in-a-lifetime" global events. For one of the first generations to have their entire lives documented in the digital sphere, it's tempting to hold on to simpler times.

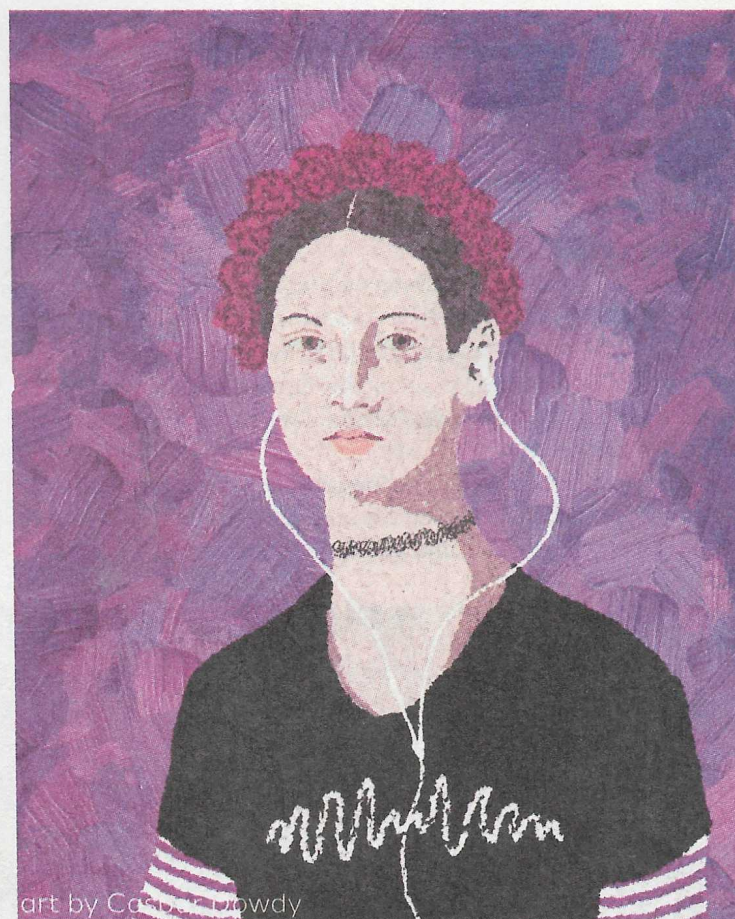
Brian Raftery of Wired Magazine theorized, in a mid-2017 article about the return of the early-'00s, that the nostalgia cycle was nearing its demise. Once the internet became the main driver of culture, and offered a media diet so personalized that few "mass-audience pop-topics" remained, we lost anything to latch

on to for future mainstream-hitting nostalgia waves.

It's a shame that Raftery's insight into the past didn't come with the power of seeing the future, because in a sense, he's still right. The 2014 revival happening in some corners of the internet is by no means universal: it's a celebration of the day's alternative scene by a new alternative audience. The ability of social media to bring people together has resulted in a landscape so fragmented that it's hard to define anything as a trend anymore, as countless subcultures tumble through their own countless cycles of "in" and "out."

The nostalgia cycle may never be over. But we definitely broke it, right along with our attention span and sense of patience. It's impossible to wait 40 years — or 30 or 20 — to see something you like again. If you want to see something, and you want to see it now, the digital world will give it to you, and a million more algorithm-curated things like it.

So brace yourself as you head into early adulthood because the return of our teen years will almost certainly come sooner than we would have once imagined. I'll see you when Gen Alpha unearths "Planet Her" and those crochet bucket hats I keep seeing on Instagram. ■



Watch, review, repeat: Letterboxd gives movie lovers creative outlet

The app allows users to explore their taste in movies while being able to express all of their movie related opinions, however popular or unpopular.

by Annisyn Krebs-Carr, staff writer

Over the summer a friend told me to get Letterboxd. It was the first time I had heard about the movie reviewing app, which had been released in 2012. It didn't take much convincing; I love to watch movies, and I love to share my unpopular opinions.

Letterboxd was the perfect app for both of those things.

Fueled mostly by boredom and the need to expand my movie taste, I watched and reviewed over 40 movies in my first month of using the app. I used Letterboxd as a diary to record my opinions about movies as I watched them, to keep track of the movies that I'd seen and to read other movie-lovers' reviews.

According to the New York Times, Letterboxd has seen its user base nearly double since the beginning of the pandemic: They now have more than 3 million member accounts, according to the company, up from 1.7 million in 2020.

As Letterboxd's popularity spiked nationally, I've also seen an increase locally.

"I first got Letterboxd about a month ago," senior Ivanna Gonzalez said. "My friend really liked it and had been trying to get me to download it for a while, so finally I did."

While Letterboxd mainly consists of film nerds and hard-core movie lovers, there is plenty of room for an average movie watcher. Once you get past the indie-wannabes who only watch A24, and film-bros who think "American Psycho" is the best movie ever created, Letterboxd can become a fun and close knit community.

"My favorite part about Letterboxd is that you are able to see and comment on your friends' reviews," senior Owen Fournie said. "You have the ability to have whole conversations over someone else's review."

You don't have to write a whole Rolling Stone-length review either; Letterboxd gives you the freedom to write whatever you want. A simple allusion or joke on how you felt about the movie is fine.

Senior Maika Schlechte said that her favorite Letterboxd review she's written was for "Sorry to Bother You," a satirical movie about race and capitalism, starring Lakeith Stanfield and Armie Hammer.

"Capitalism + Armie Hammer = bad," reads Schlechte's review.

"I'm not an acclaimed reviewer," Schlechte said. "My reviews are just what comes to my head, and usually they're short and stupid. But they get my point across."

Letterboxd's lack of structure is one of the things that I find so appealing about the app, but when people have the ability to openly voice their opinions, there are always a few reviews to be skeptical of.

So here are a few red flags to watch out for when you begin

your Letterboxd journey.

Anyone who calls movies "films." The "Joker" is not a film, it's a movie, and if you aren't a world renowned critic, put the word film away.

The second big red flag is anyone whose favorite movie is "Taxi Driver." I know that you're lying if you say "Taxi Driver" is your favorite movie because it might have been the most boring movie I've ever seen. And my opinion is always correct.

And my final Letterboxd red flag is anyone who claims that "Lady Bird" is A24's best movie. It's not, and I truly have only two words to describe my feelings for that movie. Dumb and boring.

But whether I appreciate your taste in movies, Letterboxd still gives you the ability to voice your own opinions and the ability to become a critic yourself.

So if you find yourself getting bored during the summer like I did, think about getting Letterboxd. You won't regret it. I know I don't.



art by Caspar Dowdy

Dissecting the theater kid stereotype from the performing arts perspective

Stereotyped, mocked and scrutinized: the theater kid stereotype actively suppresses students' ability to express their love of drama and theater.

by Jalen Flowers, staff writer

One student is reciting their lines, another is riding on a hoverboard and another is wearing a cowboy hat.

This is the average after school rehearsal for the drama club, where the performing arts rooms and hallway are full of theater kids in their element, participating in their favorite activity.

Unfortunately for the drama club members who participate in rehearsals and performances, they face scrutiny from their peers. Social media trends have given theater kids a stereotype of being annoying and flamboyant individuals.

"I know people don't mean it in the nicest way when I hear it," sophomore drama club member Gabriela Bannister said. "I've heard people say 'You're a theater kid, those people scare me.' It takes some getting used to, but I welcome the title."

The theater kid stereotype, which says these students are known for bursting into song, having expressive personalities and being diehard "Hamilton" fans, has become an internet phenomenon.

Social media videos have been released where students at any school put the spotlight on the theater kid, insulting their interests. The stereotype these students face describes them as annoying or obnoxious individuals, overly fixated on what they do.

"I feel like we're not allowed to have as much pride for ourselves without getting that label," junior drama club member Austin Budwell said. "But we can't help being proud of the energy we represent and the things we get to do."

At the core of the drama club is experienced students, who have dedicated a majority of their high school experience to

president of the drama club. As a performer and a member of the club's tech crew, Tichenor embodies the club in and of itself.

"I wouldn't call myself the face of drama club, but a lot of people know I'm involved," Tichenor said. "I've become synonymous with the stereotype, but being a member is like pure serotonin, so I embrace it."

Social media trends have gone so far as to mock theater and drama club members with others finding and recording them in school. Videos depict users dressing up in bright colors, using animated gestures and being as objectionable as a caricature can be.

"I know the stereotype kind of paints us as flamboyant or dramatic," Tichenor said. "It's unfair because I feel like the stereotype is more rooted in homophobia than anything."

As one of the largest clubs in the school, the drama club features a diverse group of students with one common interest. This large and inclusive group comes together to build four stage productions each year.

"If people knew how much fun we have I think we'd get more respect," senior Noelle Sonderegger said, "but at the same time, we try not to worry about any marginalizers because we're having fun."

Sonderegger, who is playing SpongeBob in the drama club's late March production of "The SpongeBob Musical," is an example of a student who encourages those around her to embrace the stereotype.

"I just feel as though we're in our zones when we're performing," Sonderegger said. "No one should be viewed in a negative way for feeling that way about what they love." ■

“

We can't help being proud of the energy we represent and the things we get to do.

”

- Austin Budwell

performing. With this longevity comes hearing all there is to be heard about being a theater kid.

"I'm the president of the club, so being a theater kid is kind of my job," senior Sam Tichenor said. "I've dealt with a lot of people who don't really understand what we do."

Tichenor gave a speech prior to his senior year on his candidacy and won the election, allowing him to become the



photo by Zach Kennett

Drama club members Sam Tichenor, Sydney Andrews, Jacob McKey and Lauren Bruss on stage during a Nov. 10 performance of "Clue."

Why and how can we celebrate March's Women's History Month?

For over 30 years, March has been recognized as Women's History Month, a month dedicated to celebrating women's rights and empowerment.

by Kody Moore, staff Writer

Women's History Month takes place in March and is a time to honor and commemorate the contributions made by women throughout history.

In 1987, Congress established March as a time to "pay tribute to the generations of women who have contributed to and influenced the history of the United States," which marked the beginning of the celebration of Women's History Month in the country.

The month of March was chosen to honor a women's protest over working conditions that took place on March 8, 1857, and became one of the most pivotal moments in the history of women's empowerment.

Since then, the month has developed into a worldwide festival, with various nations recognizing the accomplishments of women in different ways.

Ceremonies, parades and other events take over across America during March, with women in politics, sports and entertainment being celebrated daily.

Women have made significant contributions to shaping the society that we live in today throughout history.

Women such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Sojourner Truth fought for women's rights, and women such as Maya Angelou, Frida Kahlo and Billie Holiday inspired generations with their creativity. Icons such as Serena Williams, Billie Jean King and Wilma Rudolph created opportunities for young girls in athletics as well.

Women have also dismantled barriers and shattered stereotypes to pave the way for future generations, from fighting for equal rights to producing ground-breaking scientific and technological findings.

Even though Women's History Month is a time to honor women's accomplishments, it also serves as a reminder that more needs to end to achieve absolute gender equality. In the workplace, in politics, and in their relationships, women still encounter obstacles.

Inspiring future generations to carry on the battle for gender equality can end by recognizing the contributions made by women throughout history.

Women's History Month can be celebrated in various ways, including reading books by and about women and attending events and seminars. We can better comprehend the difficulties women face and the accomplishments they achieve by learning about women's contributions throughout history.

"Women are very important people," senior Madi Walters said, "Women have done a lot of stuff to get where we are today, and sometimes it is still not enough to receive more recognition and credit." ■

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Ginsburg was the first female to be a part of the US Supreme Court. She was the longest active supreme court member until her death in 2020.



KAMALA HARRIS

Harris was the first woman to be a vice president in US history. She is also the first of Asian descent to enter the vice-president role.



QUEEN ELIZABETH

Queen Elizabeth II has been the reigning monarch of the United Kingdom since 1952 until her death in 2021. She always maintained a steady and dignified presence as a symbol of national unity and continuity.



SUSAN B. ANTHONY

Anthony was an American women's rights activist, abolitionist, and suffragist. She also played a key role in drafting the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, which granted women the right to vote in 1920, 14 years after her death.





I spent 48 hours without my phone and almost died *not clickbait*

In an attempt to learn more about the effects of screen time and phone usage, I went phoneless and experienced results that were catastrophic.

by Maddox Karnes, culture editor

Walking into EHS, you can count on one hand how many people aren't looking down at illuminated bricks. In just a decade, smartphones have gone from a luxury to a common necessity.

More specifically, they've become a necessity to younger generations. Smartphones are to teenagers like Tiger Den iced coffee is to girls with flared leggings: essential. The average teenager spends approximately nine hours a day looking at a screen, according to Mayo Clinic. They also report that screen time is directly tied to issues with face-to-face social skills, behavioral problems and the inability to focus among kids and teenagers.

These facts alarm me. I am no different than the teenagers these studies are talking about; as I write this, my current average screen time is 5 hours and 22 minutes a day. I pick up my phone an average of 87 times a day, according to iPhone's screen time app.

To remedy this, I decided to make both those numbers drop to zero, at least briefly. I planned to go phoneless for four days,

wanting to see if my cellphone is really tainting my life in the way the experts say it is. By doing so, I hoped my life would improve.

I locked my smartphone in a bag. I allowed myself my laptop for work purposes and a phone only capable of outgoing calls (in case of any unlikely emergencies).

So with my phone imprisoned and my nerves high, I began my week 'off the grid.'

The morning of day one was truly fine. I usually wake up to my phone first thing every day, but it wasn't too bad not having it there. I slept in for a bit and rejuvenated myself. The real issues began once I arrived at school.

I hadn't realized how much time I aimlessly spent tapping away on social media before, after and sometimes during class (sorry study hall.) My screen time app reports that I spend at least an hour and a half on social media every day, and some days it's as high as two and a half hours. This statistic matches up with most teenagers. According to The Healthy Journal, the average teenage spends around half of their screen time on social media.

So that's about two hours of my day freed up. What did I do with it, you may ask. Well, at first it was like I was having withdrawal. I was antsy, like a baby separated from its pacifier – if the pacifier had Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat.

Things got better as the day went by. After lunch, I embraced the no-phone life. I felt focused and in control.

Music was also a big factor in all of this. I couldn't use Apple music if I had no phone. So, I resorted to the next best thing: records and CDs.

It was different from what I was used to, but I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy it. It's much easier to just consume music when it's playing on a radio or record player instead of constantly checking your phone to see what song is playing next.

I was adapting. No, I was thriving. The no phone life had zero drawbacks – sort of.

The morning of day two, I felt optimistic. The experts weren't lying, I thought. I was feeling the positive effects of staying off my phone, and I couldn't wait for the next day. I had a field trip that morning and needed to be at school at 6 a.m. to catch the bus. I was on my way, and the worst thing that could happen while you don't have your phone happened: I got into a car accident.

A coyote appeared in the middle of the road; I moved to the left to avoid it, but it moved with me. I swerved to the right, went into a ditch, and the next thing I knew my car was on the side of the road upside down.

I sat perpendicular to the ground, looking right down at the ceiling of my 2009 Pontiac Vibe. I had a moment of panic, but once I assessed that I was completely unhurt, I calmed down. I reached for my phone to call for help – and then I remembered.



photo courtesy of Dave Golem

I'm standing next to the remains of my car after I got into a car accident without my phone on Feb. 22. Minutes before, my mother ran to me with wet hair and her bath robe on. She also informed me that my phone experiment would be coming to a close that day and that she was buying me crystals to put in my next car for 'good juju' to avoid any further wrecks.

My calm quickly turned to a second wave of panic. I scavenged the car for the extra phone I had (the one for unlikely emergencies). I found it and began calling all the emergency numbers I had saved in the phone and the ones I could remember, but nobody answered.

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My calm quickly turned to a second wave of panic.

”

The people I called didn't have the number saved in their phones, so four out of the first five people I called declined, thinking it was spam. I was able to call one friend but they were too far away to be of any help. All they could do was relay the message.

So there I was upside down in a car, alone and phoneless. I felt helpless and hopeless. Luckily, a man drove by in a truck who called for help and got me out of the car. All was OK.

But after that incident, I had as they say a “come to Jesus moment.” I had been on board with the no phone lifestyle. Other than occasional wanting to message friends, I wasn't missing out on too much.

That was before my car flipped 180 degrees in approximately three seconds. I got lucky, but not everyone will. Phones are important. They aren't just for talking with friends or entertainment; they're tools that can save lives.

After my flipping good time, my mom made me take back my phone, and the experiment had concluded.

I feel that yes, it's OK to use a smartphone. ABC News reports that 69% of kids have a phone by the time they're 12, and I can't say that makes me totally upset. If those kids are ever in a bad situation, they'll hopefully have a way out of it with a phone.

Those bad statistics about screen time and social media are probably true, but I found that ditching your phone isn't the key; moderation is.

Don't be afraid to set your phone down when you're out with friends or trying to stay focused in class or work. I promise you'll surprise yourself with the positive difference it can make sometimes.

My final takeaways are: stay safe, try to limit your phone usage and watch out for coyotes. ■

America, realize you are endangering trans youth and adults in 2023

America is a leading country in transphobic bills, with an astounding 321 waiting to be passed or denied, but bills are not the only things trans people worry about.

by Nat Becker, views editor

2023 has been a tough year for transgender people, and we aren't even three months in.

As of Feb. 17, legislation from states introduced 321 anti-trans bills compared to last year's total of 278, according to the American Civil Liberties Union.

Fortunately, only three laws have been passed and enacted, in Utah, South Dakota and Tennessee. But that won't stop more anti-trans bills from being created.

With transphobia making its way across the U.S., it begs the question: what's going to happen to the trans community after those bills are enacted?

The real answer is that they're not going to disappear. What legislation is doing is banning the access to safe healthcare for trans people. This means trans people could be injured in the process of transitioning without access to safe procedures.

This is deranged. This is banning health care for humans. There's nothing different about trans people. We are all humans; denying humans access to healthcare is a human rights violation.

It's not a surprise that conservatives support the anti-trans bills. Political commentators like Tucker Carlson, Matt Walsh and Ben Shapiro go out of their way to misgender trans people and use their platform to spread transphobic rhetoric.

This rhetoric spreads through the media like wildfire, and now it has hit the gaming sphere.

There's controversy surrounding the new game "Hogwarts Legacy" because it is an extension to the Wizarding World franchise created by famous transphobe J.K. Rowling.

Warner Bros. Games, the developers behind the game, said that Rowling had no part in making the game. The developers even added a new trans character.

But according to PinkNews, the character was nothing more than a way to "shut people up" about Rowling's transphobia. There is apparently no story behind the character either.

In the journalism world, Rowling's transphobia was defended by The New York Times in an opinion article titled "In Defense of J.K. Rowling." The article was put on the front page of the website.

The column is a stab in the back to some of the staff members who had written a letter to New York Times executives about the negative coverage of trans and non-binary people, according to the Guardian.

The column is nothing short of a misogynistic, transphobic piece saying Rowling's words were justified. Pamela Paul, the writer, said that there was no evidence of Rowling ever denying trans people existed. But if you scroll down Rowling's Twitter page, it won't be hard to find transphobic tweets.

After reading the column myself, I want to yell at Paul and tell her: "Rowling is a transphobe. You are just blinded by your own transphobia that you cannot see it yourself."

As a person who is gender non-conforming, I am worried for the safety of trans and non-binary people. Gender-affirming healthcare might be lost, and trans people are getting hate crimed and accused of heinous things just for existing.

Trans people can't so much as breathe without getting hate from transphobes. A famous example would be actress Dylan Mulvaney. She started transitioning over a year ago and gets consistent pushback from political commentators and Republicans alike.

Rep. Marjorie Taylor-Greene (R-Ga.) tweeted after Mulvaney interviewed President Joe Biden saying, "I introduced a bill to stop gender affirming care on kids & they want me dead. I'm being swatted while fake women visiting Biden are being swooned."

People have the right to express opinions on people, but saying trans people shouldn't exist is a terrible opinion. For the number of trans people in the U.S., which is a small amount, there sure is a lot of pending legislation against them.

Whatever's happening in the U.S. is unsafe for trans youth. It's even unsafe for trans adults.

Though the transphobia will never stop, I hope that no additional bills will be passed. They're restricting health care, education and other basic human rights from trans people.

Sadly, I don't think that'll be the case as long as there are old bigots at the state and federal level.

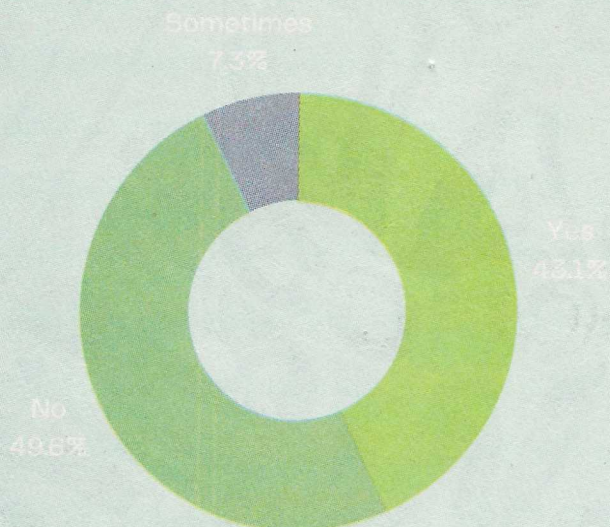
Hopefully our generation can usher in a better level of acceptance for our trans counterparts and give them a reason to keep existing. ■



art by Caspar Dowdy

ASK EHS

Do you usually travel for spring break?



"I'm looking forward to touring my college for the first time! I've only seen pictures of the college, so I'm very excited to see the whole thing,"
—senior Jessica Layet, visiting University of Colorado-Boulder

The most popular vacation destinations!

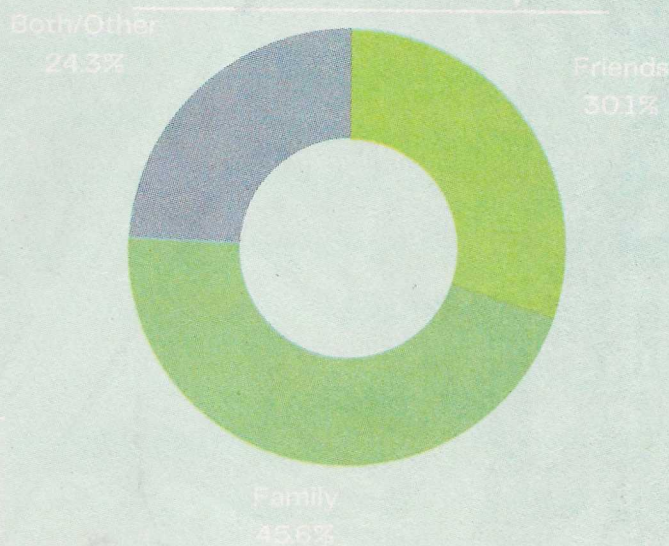


1. Florida
2. College visits
3. New York
4. Washington, D.C.
5. Mexico



"The best part about spring break is definitely just being away from school work and being stress-free. Sleeping in is always a plus,"
—sophomore Grace Andrews, visiting Wilmington, North Carolina

Do you hang out with friends or family?



6. Chicago
7. Georgia
8. Colorado
9. Nashville
10. California

*poll of 147 students

